

IS GAṆEŚA A VEDIC GOD ?

By

Y. KRISHAN

Generally the orthodox Indian scholars and religious leaders¹ maintain, on the basis of certain *mantras* in the *Rg Veda*, *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, that in the Vedas Gaṇeśa was known as Brahmanaspati. Though modern scholars generally hold that Gaṇeśa is a non-Vedic god, a few accept, in somewhat qualified manner, that there is evidence of Vedic origins of Gaṇeśa.

Alice Getty² cites the mystic prayer in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* X. 1. 5 addressed to Dantin as referring to the Elephant-faced god. Louis Renou³ finds in the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* of the *Yajurveda* evidence of the Vedic origin of Gaṇeśa. Father Heras⁴ observed that the name Gaṇapati “appears for the first time in the *Rg Veda*. Brahmanaspati is given the title of Gaṇapati, “the lord of the Gaṇas”, *gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe*, the latter forming the host of demi-gods, which later were supposed to be the attendants of Siva”. Further he asserts that the reference to Dantin in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* identifies Gaṇapati with the Vedic Dantin, a name which

-
- ¹ (i) Karpatri identifies Gaṇapati of the *Rg Veda* with the elephant-faced god Gaṇeśa “Gaṇapati-tattva” in *Kalyāṇa*, Gorakhpur, 1948 (*Gaṇeśa Aṅka*), pp. 25–30. See also Jamna Dass Akhtar : Introduction to H. Heras, *The Problem of Gaṇapati*, Delhi, 1972, p. iv.
- (ii) Swami Gangesvarananda : “Vedon me Gaṇapati” (Hindi) (Gaṇapati in the Vedas), *Kalyāṇa*, Gorakhpur, 1948 (*Gaṇeśa Aṅka*), pp. 38–41.
- (iii) Neeraja Kanta Chaudhuri Deva Sharma : “Vedic Devatā Jyēṣṭharāja Gaṇeśa” in Hindi ; *Kalyāṇa*, ibid. pp. 64–70.
- (iv) Baladeva Upadhyaya : “Gaṇapati Rahasya”, *Kalyāṇa*, ibid., pp. 87–90 ; also *Purāṇa Vimarśa* (Hindi) Varanasi, 1965, pp. 480–81. He asserts that the basic form of almost all the Paurāṇic devatās is to be found in the Vedas.
- (v) Gopinatha Kaviraja : “Siddhidātā Gaṇeśa,” *Kalyāṇa*, ibid., p. 47.
- (vi) Jagadguru Niranjan Deva : “Śrī Gaṇapati-pūjana kī prācīnatā evam vaidikatā,” *Kalyāṇa*, ibid., pp. 18–19.
- (vii) Venirama Sharma : “Śrī Gaṇeśa—Vedic Devatā”, *Kalyāṇa*, ibid., pp. 353–355.
- (viii) Sivasankara Awasthi : “Vedon Me Gaṇapati”, *Kalyāṇa*, ibid., pp. 123–127.
- ² Alice Getty ; *Gaṇeśa*, New Delhi, 1971 (2nd ed.), p. 1. She cites Przyluski's opinion that Rudra, Śiva and Gaṇeśa were originally one and the same god. Ibid., p. 2.
- ³ Renou : “Note sur les origines vediques de Gaṇeśa,” *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, 1937, cited in Paul B. Courtright : *Gaṇeśa*, New York, 1985, p. 9.
- ⁴ H. Heras ; *The Problem of Gaṇapati*, Delhi, 1972, pp. 27–28.

is also given to him in the historical period. Courtright⁵ maintains that the Vedic and Brāhmaṇic references to *gaṇapati*, *dantin* and *vakratuṇḍa* are slim evidence on which to establish the historical origins of the god. “ Nevertheless they are vitally important to the later tradition of Gaṇeśa worship because they link Gaṇeśa with the Vedic corpus of literature and lend him the aura of its immeasurable authority ”.

The *Ṛg Veda* (*RV*) II. 23. 1, and also *Yajurveda* : *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* *Taittirīya Samhitā* (*TS*) 2. 3. 14. 3 and *Kāṭhaka Samhitā* (*KS*) 10. 12. 44, read :

*Gaṇānām*⁶ *tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe kavim kavīnām upamaśravastamam | Jyeṣṭharājāṃ brahmaṇām brahmaṇaspata ā naḥ śṛṇvannūtibhiḥ sīda sādānam.*

We invoke thee as the lord of hosts, the wise among the wise, Bṛhaspati the leader among the learned brāhmaṇas.

(a) In the *Ṛg. Veda* this *mantra* is addressed to Brahmanaspata.

In the *Kāṭhaka Samhitā* it is addressed to Agni and Viṣṇu (*agnāvaiṣṇavam*).

In the *Taittirīya Samhitā* this is a *mantra* to be recited in special sacrifices in honour of various gods such as Agni, Maruts, Varuṇa, Indra, Soma, Rudra etc.

None of these *mantras* is addressed to the classical Gaṇeśa, Gaṇapati or Vināyaka.

(b) The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁷ (*AB*) 4. 4. 1 explains *gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe* occurring in *Ṛg* II. 23. 1 as addressed to Brahmanaspata who is identified with Bṛhaspati.

The *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* VIII. 5. 7. 1–3 and the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa* 8. 5 also identify *gaṇapati* with Brahmanaspata who is wise (*abhirūpa*) and who protects.⁸ The *Śāṅkhāyana*⁹ *Br.* 9. 6 describes *gaṇapati* as one who does not belong to the species of birds of prey and who is the repository of wisdom.

⁵ Paul B. Courtright ; *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ A. B. Keith and A. A. Macdonell in *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, London, 1912, ii, 343 take *gaṇa* to mean troop. More importantly they identify *gaṇa* with *Vṛāta* which in the *Ṛg.* and *Atharvaveda* means the host of living, troop.

⁷ *iti brāhmaṇaspatyam brahma vai bṛhaspatirbrahmaṇaivainam tadbhiṣajyati.*

⁸ *iti brāhmaṇaspatyā abhirūpām abhiṣṭauti.*

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB) 13. 2. 8. 4 this *gaṇapati* is identified with horse that has the capacity to take the gods to heaven.

(c) A variant of this *mantra* is found in the *Śuklayajurveda Vājasaneyī Samhitā* (*Mādhyandina* 23. 19 and the *Kāṇva Samhitā* 25. 21-22) and *Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā* 3. 12. 20.

Gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe
Priyānām tvā priyapatim havāmahe
Nidhīnām tvā Nidhipatim havāmahe vaso mama
Āhamajāni garbhadhamā tvamajāsi garbhadham

We invoke or pray to you who is the protector of hosts (of beings). We invoke you who is the lord or protector of the dear ones, that is, who is most adorable and who is the protector or guardian of wealth or material means. You are my maintainer, you are the womb of the world (the creator). May I know the matrix (of life) (the Hiraṇyagarbha).

These *mantras* of this section of *YV* are recited in the performance of *aśvamedha* sacrifice and addressed to Hiraṇyagarbha, Vāyu, Prajāpati etc.

(d) The commentators, *bhāṣyakāras*, have explained the relevant expression *gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim* (*Rg.* II. 23. 1).

(i) Venkaṭamādhava (11th century A. D.) :

devagaṇānām patim, the lord of the hosts of gods. Sāyaṇa (14th century A.D.) : *gaṇānām devādigagaṇānām sambandhinām gaṇapatim svāminām patim* : the lord of the hosts of devas etc. and the related beings, the lord of lords.

(ii) TS 2. 3. 14. 3

Sāyaṇa (14th century A. D.) :

gaṇānām gaṇapatim kṛtsnadevagaṇasvāminām tvām havāmahe : we invoke thee who is the lord of hosts ; the lord of the entire hosts of devas.

Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara (14th century A.D.) : *tvām gaṇānām sarveṣām sambandhinām gaṇapatim grāmādi-samghāta-svāminām havāmahe* : you are the lord of all the related hosts, the lord of a group of villages etc., we invoke thee.

The commentary on the variant verses is similar.

VS 23. 19 : *gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe*, Uvaṭa (11th century) : *gaṇānām tvā strīgaṇānām madhye tvām yugapat gaṇapatim havāmahe*,

(We invoke thee who is the lord amongst the hosts including the hosts of females).

Mahīdhara (16th century) : Addressing horse (*aśvam*) — *kīdṛśam tvām gaṇarūpeṇa pālakam* (O Horse, of what kind you are or who are you? You are *gaṇapati*, the lord among the hosts (*gaṇas*), the protector of the entity of *gaṇas* i. e. the multitude of creation.)

To sum up, none of the medieval commentators interprets the *mantras* as referring to the classical Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati.

The meaning of the word gaṇa in Vedic literature :

In Ṛg IV. 50. 6 the word *gaṇa* stands for the hosts or band of Aṅgirasas.

Ṛg Veda X. 112. 9 is addressed to Indra :

*ni śu sīda gaṇapate gaṇeṣu
tvām āhur-vipratamaṁ kavīnām
na ṛte tvat kriyate kiṁ canāre
mahām arkam maghavañ citram arca.*⁹

(O Indra) the lord of hosts be seated among the hosts, you are the excellent or the best among the learned. Without you nothing is near (within reach) nothing far off (beyond reach); (O Indra) who is the bountiful or munificent great Sun or Lightening, who is excellent, most distinguished, brilliant or worshipful. Venkaṭamādhava comments : *niśīda suṣṭhu gaṇapate, teṣāṁ madhye*, O Lord of hosts sit aptly among thy hosts

In this *mantra* Gaṇapati is identified with Indra. In TS 3. 4. 5. 1 the lordship of various Vedic gods is described : Agni, lord of creatures, Soma of *Oṣadhi* or herbs, Savitā, the lord of births or creation, Rudra, the lord of animals, Viṣṇu, of the mountains, Maruts, lord of the hosts (*māruto gaṇānām adhipatayaḥ*). In TS 4. 1. 2. 2 (*Vāj.* 11. 15) the Rudra is said to provide leadership (*rudrasya gāṇapatyam*) of hosts. TS 4. 5. 4. 1 (*Vāj.* 16. 25) pay homage to various forces including *namo gaṇebhyo gaṇapatibhyaś ca vo namo namo* — homage to the hosts and to You, lords of hosts.

Sāyaṇa and Mahīdhara interpret *gaṇapatibhyaḥ* as *devānucara*, the followers of gods, *bhūtaviśeṣa*. Mahīdhara explains the word *gaṇapati* as the

⁹ *Śyeno na yonim sadanam dhiyā kṛtaṁ gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim.*

protector or guardian (*pālaka*) of *gaṇas*, *nānājātīyānām vrāta*, hosts of various species. Uvaṭa in his commentary on *Mādhyandina Samhitā* 16. 25 interprets *gaṇānām* as *gaṇasamūhaḥ* – a gathering of *gaṇas*.

The *Brhad-Devatā* (*BrD*) of Śaunaka uses the word *gaṇa* in relation to —

- (a) group (*gaṇa*) of deities on this earth, those belonging to Agni (*BrD* i. 119–120).
- (d) group (*gaṇa*) of deities of the middle sphere belonging to Indra – (*gaṇas ca apsarasām*, *DrB* i, 121, 127).
- (c) group (*gaṇa*) of deities of the heavenly sphere belonging to Sūrya (*BrD* ii, 7).

BrD i. 47 says that the name of the hosts of Martus is Rudras ।
Mārutāṃ tu gaṇasyaitan nāma rudra.

Gaṇeśa or elephant-headed god in Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā of Yajur-Veda :

There is one *mantra* in the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* 2. 9. 1. 3–13 which clearly refers to the classical Gaṇeśa. This *mantra* has 11 *gāyatrīs* addressed to various deities. The fourth *gāyatrī* is :

*tat karāṭāya vidmahe hastimukhāya dhīmahi
tanno Dantī pracodyāt.*

Karāṭa is the name of Gaṇeśa Hastimukha, elephant-faced, which again points to the classical Gaṇeśa, elephant-headed god. Dantī refers to the elephant having tusks and thus again is indicative of Gaṇeśa.

While there cannot be any doubt that this hymn of the *MS* does refer to Gaṇeśa, there is overwhelming, nay conclusive, evidence to prove that it was an interpolation.

(a) This *mantra* is to be found only in the *MS* and in none of the other recensions of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* viz. the *Taittirīya Samhitā*, the *Kāthaka Samhitā* and the *Kaṣīṭhala Samhitā*. It is also not to be found in the *Śukla Yajurveda* recensions (*Kāṇva* and *Mādhyandina*).

(b) The apocryphal character of this *mantra* is established by comparison with similar *mantras* in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* which is in two recensions *Ānandāśrama* (*TA Ānandāśrama*) and *Andhra* (*TA Andhra*).

(i) The *MS* contains 11 *gāyatrīs* whereas there are only 5 *gāyatrīs* in *TA Ānandāśrama* and 6 *gāyatrīs* in *Andhra* recensions.

(ii) Some *gāyatrīs* are common between *MS* and *TA* Ānandāśrama and *TA* Andhra. But some are exclusive to each of these texts : *gāyatrīs* to Gaurī, Candra, Vahni, Dhyāna and Sṛṣṭi – Vainateya are exclusive to *MS*, Durgā and Garuḍa to *TA* Ānandāśrama, and Nandī, Narasimha and Agni to *TA* Andhra.

(iii) Though some of the *gāyatrīs* are common yet the names of the gods are variant :

The gods addressed in the various *gāyatrīs* are tabulated below. In other words there was no standardised list of Vedic *gāyatrīs* both in their numbers and the gods to whom they are addressed and in the the names of the gods invoked.

It is significant that the *gāyatrī* addressed to elephant-headed god is named *Dantī gāyatrī* in the *MS* and as *Gaṇeśa gāyatrī* in *TA* (Ānandāśrama recension).

(iv) The names of the gods to whom the *gāyatrīs* are addressed : Girisutā (Gaurī), Kumāra, Kārttikeya, Skanda, Caturmukha, Padmāsana, (Brahmā of the Vedas), Keśava, Nārāyaṇa (Vedic Viṣṇu), Bhānu, Bhāskara, Durgā, Nandī, Narasimha are patently post-Vedic gods.¹⁰ This is indicative of the interpolative character of these *mantras*.

It is also noteworthy that while Sāyaṇa's commentary is available on the Ānandāśrama recension of the *TA*, there is no commentary of Sāyaṇa on the Andhra recension of that text. It would appear that the Andhra recension of *TA* came into existence after Sāyaṇa.

Relationship between Gaṇeśa, Agni and Rudra :

A scholar¹¹ has sought to establish indirectly that Gaṇeśa is a *Vaidic* god by positing that Gaṇeśa (Gaṇapati) is an epithet of Rudra which, according to him, is a form of Agni. He cites *Yajurveda* 11. 15 *rudrasaya gāṇapatyam* : Rudra is gaṇapati and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (*ŚB*) 6. 1. 3. 18 which

¹⁰ V. V. Mirashi : *Literary and Historical Studies in Indology*. New Delhi, 1975, pp. 57–59, has adduced considerable evidence to prove that the section of the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* in which the *gāyatrī* mantra about Gajānana occurs is interpolated. He points out that most of the thirteen *gāyatrīs* included in it are about later Paurāṇic deities not mentioned in the Vedic texts; the gods invoked are not Vedic; the cognate *Kāṣṭhaka* and *Kapiṣṭhala samhitās* do not contain these *gāyatrī* mantras; the word-forms and accents in them show several irregularities.

¹¹ Hans Raj : *Physical and Scientific Interpretation of Aryan Mythology*, Pt. I. *Gaṇeśa (Gaṇapati)*. Kumāra-Skanda-Kārttikeya, Two Aśvins and Yama (New Delhi, 1957).

| <i>S. No.</i> | <i>Name of the Text</i> | <i>Name of the Gāyatrī</i> | <i>Names of gods invoked</i> | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| 1. | <i>MS</i> | Rudra | Tatpuruṣa | Mahādeva | Rudra |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | Rudra | Tatpuruṣa | Mahādeva | Rudra |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 2. | <i>MS</i> | Gaurī | Gaṅgaucyā | Girisutā | Gaurī |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 3. | <i>MS</i> | Skanda | Kumāra | Kārttikeya | Skanda |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | Kārttikeya | Tatpuruṣa | Mahāsenā | Ṣaṇmukha |
| 4. | <i>MS</i> | Dantī | Karāṭa | Hastimukha | Dantī |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | Gaṇeśa | Tatpuruṣa | Vakratuṇḍa | Dantī |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 5. | <i>MS</i> | Brahmā | Caturmukha | Hiraṇyagarbha | Brahmā |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | Brahmā | Vedātma | Hiraṇyagarbha | Brahmā |
| 6. | <i>MS</i> | Viṣṇu | Keśava | Nārāyaṇa | Viṣṇu |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | Nārāyaṇa | Nārāyaṇa | Vāsudeva | Viṣṇu |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 7. | <i>MS</i> | Bhānu | Bhāskara | Prabhākara | Bhānu |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | Bhāskara | Bhāskara | Mahādhyuti | Āditya |
| 8. | <i>MS</i> | Candra | Somarāja | Mahārāja | Candra |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |

| <i>S. No.</i> | <i>Name of the Text</i> | <i>Name of the Gāyatrī</i> | <i>Names of gods invoked</i> | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 9. | <i>MS</i> | Vahni | Tajjvalana | Vaiśvanara | Vahni |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 10. | <i>MS</i> | Dhyāna | Tyajapa | Mahājapa | Dhyāna |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 11. | <i>MS</i> | Sṛṣṭi Vainateya | Paramātmā | Vainateya | Sṛṣṭi |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 12. | <i>MS</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | Garuḍa | Tatpuruṣa | Suvarṇapakṣi | Garuḍa |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 13. | <i>MS</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | Durgā or Kātyāyanī | Kātyāyanī | Kanyākumārī | Durgā |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | — | — | — | — |
| 14. | <i>MS</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | Nandī | Tatpuruṣa | Cakratuṇḍa | Nandī |
| 15. | <i>MS</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | Narasimha | Vajranakha | Tikṣṇadamṣṭra | Narasimha |
| 16. | <i>MS</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Ānandāśrama</i> | — | — | — | — |
| | <i>TA Andhra</i> | Agni | Vaiśvānara | Lālila | Agni |

enumerates *rudra* as one of the eight forms of Agni (*agnirūpāṇi*). But this proposition cannot be sustained if we examine the Vedic character of Agni and Rudra.

In Vedic literature, Agni means (i) fire, (ii) the god of fire, and (iii) sacrificial fire (*agnihotra*) of three kinds.

As a god of fire, he is quite distinct and different from the Vedic Rudra and is an associate of Indra. In later mythology, ram becomes the *vāhana* of Agni, the god.

In Vedic literature the word *rudra* is used as an adjective (howling, roaming, crying, dreadful, terrific, frightful, formidable etc.) and as a noun, the name of Vedic god, the storm god, or god of tempests, the chief of Maruts (*pitṛ marutām RV 1. 114. 6, 9*) who are associated with lightning.

In post-Vedic literature, he is the father and ruler of 11 *rudras* said to be inferior manifestations of Śiva or Rudra.

As pointed out by Macdonell,¹² it is only in Brāhmaṇas that Rudra is identified with *agni*. Perhaps with the growth in the importance of the fire cult in the Brāhmaṇas, *agni*, as sacrificial fire, as distinct from god of fire, came to be described as *rudra*. Rudra is one of the forms of *agni* (*agnirūpam*) *ŚB* 6. 1. 3. 18 and not *agnideva-rūpa* form of god Agni.

It should further be noted that in post-Vedic mythology it is Skanda, and not Gaṇeśa,¹³ who is considered as son of Agni as is evident from the names¹⁴ of the former : Agnikumāra, Agnigarbha, Agniya, Agnijanman, Agnijāta, Agninandana. It would thus be erroneous to identify Gaṇeśa (Gaṇapati) as Agni and thereby invest it with Vedic antiquity.

Atharva Veda and Gaṇeśa :

The *Atharvaveda* 19. 9. 6-11 are the *mantras*, seeking appeasement of various evil and good causing deities, and they are addressed to Mitra, Viṣṇu, Prajāpati, Indra, Bṛhaspati, Aryaman, Varuṇa, Vivasvant, Utpātas, ulkāś (meteors), Rāhu, Dhūmaketu, Rudras, Vasus, Ādityas, etc. But Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati or Vināyaka is not mentioned.

¹² Macdonell ; *Sanskrit English Dictionary* : Rudra in Sts (stems) in Br. (Brāhmaṇas) (is) regarded as a form of Agni.

¹³ Hans Raj : *ibid.*, p. 1. He (Gaṇeśa) is considered as a son of Rudra like Kumāra (Skanda, Kārttikeya).

¹⁴ A. M. Ghatage : *An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Sanskrit on Historical Principles* ; Vol. I, Poona, 1976-78. The birth of Skanda from Agni and Svāhā is described in *Āraṇyaka* of *Mbh* 3. 215.

Gaṇeśa and Vedic Ritualistic practices :

It is significant that Gaṇeśa, Vināyaka or Gaṇapati find no mention in the Vedic ritualistic practices of Vaiśvadeva¹⁵ or *Viśve devāḥ* sacrifices consisting of offerings in *devayajña* (sacrifice to gods), *bhūtayajña* (sacrifice to various spirits or beings) involving *bali-haraṇa* (offerings but not in fire) and *pitryajña* (sacrifice to manes).

Vedic¹⁶ *śānti* inter alia is a rite of appeasement. It is a rite¹⁷ that appeases the evil aspects of a deity and makes that deity beneficent, for example, averting the fierce and evil aspect of Agni, Soma, Rudra etc. As Yāska (*Nirukta* IV. 21) explains it : *Śamanam ca rogāṇām yāvanam ca bha-yānām* allaying diseases and warding off dangers. In other words, the *śānti* rites are performed specifically to avert evil by appeasing the wrath of gods.

In the Vedic *śānti* rites Gaṇeśa, Vināyaka or Gaṇapati does not occur. The *śānti* rites are addressed to Vedic gods,¹⁸ and deities : Indra, Brahmā, Rudra, Vasus, Ādityas, Soma, Bṛhaspati, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Rāhu, Ketu.

The absence of Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati from Vedic ritualistic practices and *śānti* rites provides additional evidence that Gaṇeśa was not a Vedic deity and that ' Gaṇeśa ' *gāyatrī*s in the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* of the *Yajurveda* are an interpolation.

¹⁵ The deities in whose honour Vaiśvadeva offerings are made in fire (*yajña*) as well as *balis*, offerings, without fire are ; Agni, Soma, Dhanvantari, Prajāpati, Sviṣṭakṛt (Agni) Brahman, Kaśyapa, Anumati, Parjanya, Dhātṛi, Vidhātṛi, Vāyu, Sūrya, Indra, Viṣṇu, Bhāradvāja, Aditi, Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati, Nakṣatras, Pūṣan, Maruts, Śrī, Bhadrakālī, Dhanapati, Yama, Vanaspati, Manyu, Kāma, Rudra, Kuḥū, Dyāvā-prthivī, Samkarṣaṇa, Aniruddha, Puruṣa, Satya, Acyuta, Vāstoṣpati.

(a) *Gr̥hyasūtra* : *Mānava-gr̥hyasūtra* II. 9 ; *Śāṅkhāyana-gr̥hyasūtra* II. 14. 1-4 ; *Pāraskara-gr̥hyasūtra* II-9, *Āśvalāyana-gr̥hyasūtra* I. 2.11-3 ; *Gobhila-gr̥hyasūtra* I. 4. 1-15 ; *Khādīra-gr̥hyasūtra* I. 5. 22-35.

(b) *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* II. 16 ; *Gautama Dharmasūtra* 5. 10-18 ; *Manu Smṛti* III. 84-86 ; *Viṣṇu Dharma Smṛti* 67. 1-3 ; *Kāṭhaka-gr̥hyasūtra* 54 ; *Bhāradvāja-gr̥hyasūtra* III. 12. See also Kane ; *History of Dharmasāstra* (Poona, 1974), Vol. II, Pt. II, pp. 741-748 and the diagram on page 747.

¹⁶ Kane : *History of Dharmasāstra* (Poona, 1971), Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 728, has explained that *śānti* is used in the early Vedic texts in several senses, viz. (i) the state of being freed from evil, (ii) means of appeasing or removing evil aspects such as water or a Vedic hymn and (iii) a rite of appeasement.

¹⁷ Kane ; *ibid.*, p. 725.

¹⁸ *Atharvaveda* (AV) 19. 9. 6-11 ; *Taittirīya Samhitā* (TS) III. 4. 10. 3 ; VI. 1. 7. 7-8 ; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 3. 2 ; 13. 10 ; 32. 4 ; 37. 2 ; *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa* 3. 3 ; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* I. 1. 8. 2.

See Kane ; *ibid.*, Vol. V, Pt. II, pp. 719-728, who has cited the various Vedic texts.